

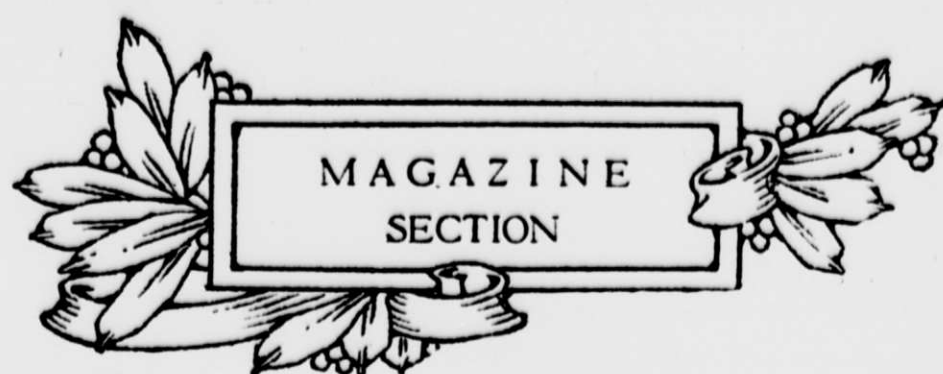


TWELVE PAGES

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MAGAZINE  
SECTION

## ALBERT

## THE KING WITHOUT A KINGDOM



**Young Ruler Has No Dwelling Place.  
Does Not Quit His Soldiers, Shares  
Their Food, Works Eighteen Hours a  
Day and Is Beloved by His People**

It was in a town of north France, on the edge of the fighting line. There appeared some German infantry uniforms. "Germans!" exclaimed the corporal. "Halt. Hesitation. Then: 'Sapristi!' said the corporal, 'they're prisoners!'"

Which was the case? 132 Germans, escorted by a dozen French soldiers, were resting in a corner of the square. Thanks to a fog, they had been able to slip across and surrender voluntarily, overcome by fatigue, sickness and famine.

They were pitiful to see. Some were wounded, their faces as white as their bandages. One, lying on a stretcher, had been shot in the flight and carried by his comrades. All had beards an inch long and the sunken eyes of men who have not slept for a week. A few wore pointed helmets, which they sold for 20 cents apiece; most were bareheaded. They stood under the windows of the town hall.

Suddenly the crowd looked up, the Germans too, with weary curiosity. In one of the old carved windows stood a young man in a dark blue uniform, of pale face and sad eyes.

Pensively he looked upon the German prisoners. Silence. All looked up as he looked down in meditation. The personality of the young man impressed all. There was no cheering, yet all knew and venerated the pale man in dark blue who looked down so thoughtfully, although three months ago few would have recognized him and still less have cared to snap to see his face. But now—

It was the young King of the Belgians, Albert, who does not quit his soldiers. He eats the ordinary fare, changes his shirt when he can, works eighteen hours a day, and has slept four nights running on the cushions of his automobile. The King has no dwelling place; no one knows where he is; yet every one has seen him.

A band of longies. The scattered French infantry laughing troop in their red trousers, assemble, form in columns, and stand facing the window where the King was.

He had disappeared; now he returns, hands resting on the old stone balcony, head bare, hair in the breeze. Beside the column is a band of trumpets, cornets, bugles—music of the infantry marching on a war footing. Its chief notes a rapid order.

At once the flags rise, while a charge time or flourish lasting some five minutes breaks upon the air. The first two rows begin the joyous salute, then up by the next two, and then the rest behind, all interweaving in melody, a fanfare of high hearts, "God with us and victory!"

While the light refrain danced in the sunlight cannon without warning

took it up and marked the measure four or five miles away.

The King looked up, half turned and talked rapidly with his orderlies behind him. The fanfare stopped short. The King waved an au revoir and disappeared, while a rapid order soon started the chasseurs to some new point. Cavalry messengers galloped up. The King's automobile glided up and he drove away with a French colonel. Not a cry or word had been uttered in the ranks or public.

"He has gone to fight!" said the old dame selling apples.

"The Queen is a lucky woman," said her gossip inconsequently.

"He's a man," explained the hunchback boy who peddles Paris papers three days old.

No other king in modern times has won such popular respect, affection, interest, confidence from his own people and the world at large in such a short time, and so young a man—unknown, one might say, previously, certainly indifferent to those who now rejoice in him as a credit to themselves.

In the first instants of the war he had an inspiration of genius, an impulse of bravery and a spirit of self-sacrifice which won him and his land eternal honor.

Since then daily during three months he has simply renewed day by day his acts of devotion and courage.

Since the day when a neighbor smashed his cities, burned his cathedrals and bombarded his libraries; since the day when the Germans emptied his municipal treasuries and the private banks of his land; when he saw in looted Liege and Louvain his priests shot down and people led away to prison, while the armies began to devastate the rich countryside and make cinder heaps of storied cities from Malines to Termonde, King Albert, leading his heroic army, has not ceased to harass the gigantic enemy.

He, the King, stays always among his soldiers. When they go to fight the King is at the front beside them; all have seen him—mayhap pointing cannon. He is there to give them heart, and does it. So much that it is a current saying with them that the King is sure to be killed yet! Yet none would have the heart nor do the King the injury to let him see them try to shield him! All these Belgian fighting men consider themselves as already dead, in principle. "And he's our chief!" they say. "What will you?"

After Neuport-Dixmude, they saw him so tired that he fell down and slept on the edge of the road, like a workman who has finished his day; and thousands passing, saw him sleeping and stopped silently, not to awake him.

The Belgian people have blind confidence in Albert. When he judged that

his beautiful old city of Alost—a "fairy story in carved stone"—must doubtless suffer from a battle in which the enemy would spare it not, and where he himself must need full liberty of movement to accomplish his duty of leader, he told the 32,000 inhabitants of Alost to quit their romantic old homes.

The touching exodus took place by night, according to the order of the King. The devoted city emptied itself family by family, man by man, drop by drop, of its life. Now the enemies might come—they would find only a carcass of beautiful stone, antique, impressive, a museum of the ages, which their shells might crush vindictively, but where no unarmed citizen, nor child, nor woman, nor sick person lying in bed could be in peril. And the King's army might now fight without risk of striking their own!

At first, they say, King Albert was tormented by such thoughts as, "I am no technician. What if I should make some great mistake of strategy or tactics?" Yet he must decide. His Generals were gathered round him. Each gave, modestly, his views—and let the King decide! None other dare, and Albert must!

It was particularly so at the beginning, when heroic little Belgium held back the Germans. Neither France nor England could aid her—neither was prepared for war.

Later Gen. Joffre expressed his admiration for the elasticity and strength of the Belgian defence.

"I listened to the Generals," replied the King, "and it seemed such a great responsibility to decide among them that I just at last picked out what seemed the plans of common sense." Of course we must remember

**France and England Grateful for Heroic  
Resistance Decided Upon by Silent  
and Timid Man Now a World Hero  
---Few of His Cities Remain Intact**

that he had been brought up an army officer and had studied strategy, more or less.

"You did well," said Joffre. "Each General, because he is a specialist and knows the great strategic schools by heart, is tempted to be partisan of this or that one. His ideas of the defence of Belgium are made up in advance and, unwittingly, he might try to force events to fit them—as has happened to the German General Staff. The high arbiter should not be partisan of any school or preconceived campaign. That is why civilians often make good Ministers of War."

And the young King blushed with pleasure.

"The young and great King of my little country," Maeterlinck calls him. "He was truly the providential man, for whom all were waiting." He embodied in beauty the deep will of his people. Suddenly he was all Belgium revealed to herself and to others. He had the great luck to take and give confidence in the most tragic moment, when the stoutest consciences may momentarily lose courage! Had he not been there things would, doubtless, not have happened in the same manner and history might have lost one of her noblest pages.

"Surely, Belgium would have been faithful to her neutrality—as Switzerland would be to-day, but Switzerland is warned, prepared and guarding her frontier, while Belgium was taken breathless. Who knows what confusion might not have resulted in a people overwhelmed as we were, what useless discussions, false manoeuvres, what fumbling, legitimate but irreparable! Above all, the necessary words, precise, unalterable, would not have been said at the necessary moment. Thanks to him, the heroic line is as straight, neat and magnificent as that of a Thermopylae indefinitely prolonged."

But what he suffers, day by day, those only can imagine who behold this hero, discreet, silent and timid. Of all his kingdom there remain only a few cities intact, and they are threatened daily. All the others, so beautiful and venerable with art and history, laughing and tranquil, happy and inoffensive, "jewels of the crown of peace," museums where tourists loved to dream, industrious, laborious, rich, open, free, are dead!

### The Kings of Belgium

Belgium's kings have been few in number but large in ability, while the Belgian people have ever been a remarkable mixture of industrious toilers and warlike patriots. John de Courcy MacDonnell, who spent twelve years in Brussels collecting the material has just issued a volume

through Little, Brown & Co. entitled "Belgium, Her Kings, Knights and People" which is of special interest at the present moment.

The Belgians, says the author, are descended from Celtic and Germanic tribes. The Celts invaded Belgium and conquered the Ligurian inhabitants of the country about 550 years before Christ; the Germanic infiltration was centuries later. The beginning of Belgian industry can be traced to Celtic sources; the Celts were the first tillers of the rich Belgian soil. The Celts and Germans descended from the same great Aryan stock. They were alike in gigantic stature. The Celts had yellow hair floating over their shoulders; they wore garments of brilliant hue, like the modern Gaels; their sons, covering neck and arms with chains of gold. The Germans, blue-eyed like the Celts, had ruddier hair twisted into knots on their heads; they wore no ornaments. The Celts were quick tempered, terrible in wrath, but normally good humored. Their tribes were aristocratic clanships. Their nobles went forth to war surrounded by dependents under a chief of all the clans, elected annually. The German government was republican. The Celt was agricultural and pastoral; the ferocious German hated a shepherd, and considered farming a disgrace to manhood. Blood, not sweat, was to him the means of acquisition. He was a warlike nomad, a temporary, lonely, but was enough for him. The brave aboriginal Celts of Gallia Belgica were, according to Caesar, supreme among the Gauls for prowess. The two races were just similar enough to blend, and unlike enough to supplement one another's extremes. The immense territory called Belgica comprised some two dozen peoples, a vast military federation, bound together only by an ancient, law of common interest.

"The federation of the Belgic peoples continued under Roman dominion and was strengthened when Roman gave way to Frank. Industry drove in Belgium under the Romans. Thanks to Roman peace, the inhabitants were able to cultivate their fields, clear their forests and attain to a considerable degree of comfort, while preserving their names and their national cults. The great towns which, far off on the sea and south, surrounded this extreme frontier of the civilized world, exercised a very slow action on them.

As the relations of the Belgian provinces with each other became more close the ties which bound them to France and Germany loosened. The power of Germany grew weak rapidly in the regions between the Scheldt and the Meuse. The support of the French Kings contributed largely to the separation of the Lowland provinces from the empire. That of the English enabled the Flemish to

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